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# Penguin Readers

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## Teacher's Guide

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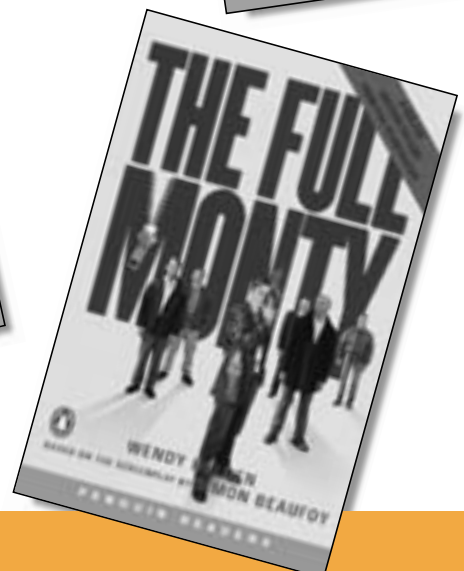
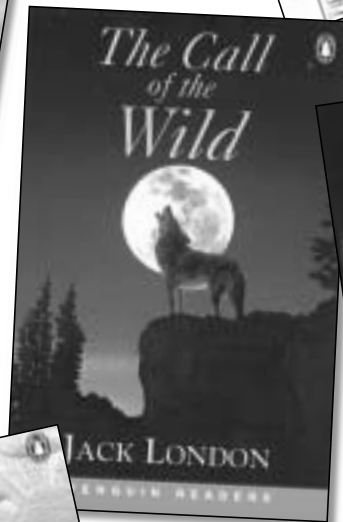
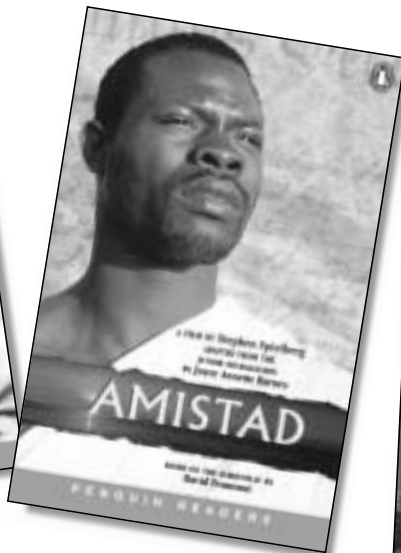
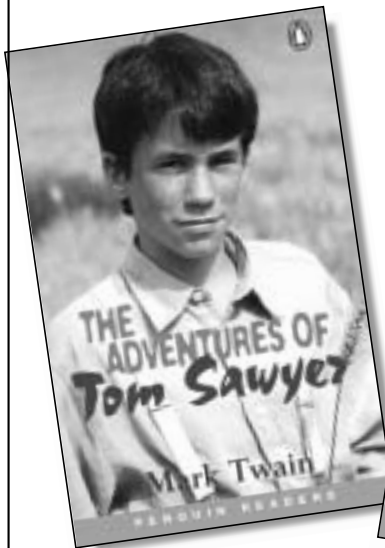
### to Using Graded Readers

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*Nick Dawson*



# The **best** choice of Graded Readers



[www.penguinreaders.com](http://www.penguinreaders.com)

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## 1

## Introduction - Graded readers and extensive reading

Comprehension, in all its forms, is now widely recognised as a key process in acquiring language. Learners who read widely achieve greater fluency in English, and gain confidence and pleasure in learning the language.

Graded readers today are of such variety and quality that more and more teachers are keen to use them. The question is always *how*? The purpose of this book is to offer teachers practical advice and suggestions for including reading in their language programmes.

The book has been compiled by practising teachers and teacher trainers, and draws on the ideas of teachers in a wide range of countries who are teaching in different types of schools and colleges.

### ■ WHAT ARE GRADED READERS?

Graded readers are books, both fiction and non-fiction. The language in graded readers is controlled so that it matches the language competence of the learners reading the books. This is achieved in various ways. Most obviously, the vocabulary load can be restricted. Learners must learn to guess the meaning of new words, but they can only do this if the density of new words is kept low. Language structures can similarly be controlled so that learners are exposed only to those structures with which they are likely to be familiar at their stage of language learning.

There are less obvious but equally important factors. The amount of information in graded readers is controlled, as this compensates for the difficulty learners have in absorbing information in a foreign language. This means for example that the narrative technique of the text is kept simple, references to cultural background explained, complex sub-plots avoided. Another factor is the use of photos and illustrations, perhaps with captions, to support the text. The position of these illustrations in relation to the text as well as the clarity of design of the book can do much to aid comprehension.

In these ways, learners have an experience of reading which is close to their experience of extensive reading in their mother tongue - without constant reference to a dictionary or the frequent need to re-read certain passages in order to understand them.

### ■ HOW DO GRADED READERS HELP LEARNERS?

Graded readers help learners in three ways - firstly by providing language practice, secondly by giving language extension and thirdly (and perhaps most importantly) by giving learners psychological encouragement.

Language practice takes the form of reading and understanding known or partially-known language. Each time the learner reads and understands a word, the learner's knowledge and understanding of that word is reinforced and extended. Each time the learner reads and

understands a structure, the learner's knowledge and understanding of that structure is reinforced and extended. A learner who is reading a graded reader is not just enjoying a story but also practising both vocabulary and structure.

Graded readers also provide a limited amount of language extension. Because of the grading process, learners should not encounter too many new words or new structures when reading. However, in every graded reader, the learner is likely to meet some unknown words. The meaning of these words is normally made clear through the use of illustrations or language within the text. In Penguin Readers, vocabulary outside the word list for a level is introduced and practised through regular Before You Read activities at the back of the book. Learners reading graded readers may also be introduced to structures which they are not yet able to use, yet can understand in their written form.

Many foreign language learners lack confidence. They have a very negative self-image of themselves as successful foreign language learners. They fail to learn because they do not believe that they are capable of learning. Successful understanding of graded readers at a suitable level can give these learners enormous psychological encouragement - a sense of achievement which will be of more value than all the new words or structures which they may learn.

### ■ WHAT IS EXTENSIVE READING?

Extensive reading is the term used in English language teaching for the reading of a wide range of books primarily for pleasure. The idea is that learners are motivated to read because they are reading for the same reasons as they would in their own language: to learn more about something they are interested in, to enjoy a good story, to think about the ideas and issues the book raises, to increase their general knowledge and awareness. Learners are reading in a completely different way from the intensive reading of the language classroom, when they are looking at detail of language points and focussing on specific reading skills.

When learners are reading for pleasure they should be as unaware as possible that they are reading in a foreign language. The enormous benefit of extensive reading to learners is that they are learning language as they read, through the high level of exposure to the foreign language which reading brings. The foreign language becomes increasingly familiar to them - so that they acquire language almost without knowing it.

It is easy to dismiss readers as being of low priority in a language teaching programme. However, if we think about language learning, we can see the tremendous value of extensive graded reading. When its full potential is exploited it is seen to improve not only reading skills but all the other language skills as well.



Graded readers have all sorts of practical benefits: they are simple to carry around - learners can read them in class, at home, in a bus or anywhere else they happen to be; reading need not take place in limited and precious class time; and for many people graded readers are relatively inexpensive. Teachers have found that once extensive reading has been introduced to a class or school it is straightforward to administer. They have also found that learners enjoy the reading and make fast progress.

To summarise, the overriding aim of extensive reading is to develop learners' language competence and self-confidence. The difficulty for teachers is often that they want to make sure that their learners are really reading. This means that they want to test their learners on their reading, which makes learners anxious and spoils their enjoyment of the stories. This can mean that learners either stop wanting to read or that they only read in order to complete the test about the text. They might indeed pass the test, but they will not have experienced the thrill of reading for pleasure or obtained the maximum value out of the text. Extensive reading can be monitored in all sorts of ways, as this book will explain, but this must never discourage the learner from wanting to read more. In the long term, it is this which will educate the learner.

### ■ WHY GRADED READERS?

The idea behind extensive reading is that learners should be reading with relative ease. They clearly cannot enjoy what they are reading if the language is too difficult and if they are anxious about not understanding it. If learners do not enjoy reading, the chances are that they will not want to continue - so the whole point is immediately lost. Graded readers are therefore a good starting point. It is important to stress, however, that through the use of graded readers we are training and preparing our students for the extensive reading of ungraded and unsimplified texts.

### ■ CHOOSING THE BOOKS

Choosing which books to read is tremendously important. Depending on how reading is administered, the level of graded readers should be suitable either for the learner's individual attainment level or for the level of the class as a whole.

Penguin Readers are carefully and conscientiously graded to meet the requirements of all levels of language competence, and learners can progress from one stage to another as gradually or rapidly as they need to.

The content of the reader is of great importance in motivating learners, and here it is often sensible to involve your classes as much as possible in the process of selection. You might like to give learners a questionnaire in order to find out their reading interests; you can then be sure that the books which are selected will be keenly read.

The Penguin Readers series includes an enormous range of readers to suit all tastes, and the Penguin Readers catalogue is an invaluable tool to help you and your learners make the right choice ■

## 2 The class reader

### ■ WHAT IS A CLASS READER?

A class reader is one particular reader chosen for the whole class to read for a certain length of time.

We recommend setting a time limit on the use of any one reader. It is not fair on learners to spin out a class reader over a whole school year. It will destroy their interest and motivation for more reading. Instead, set a target of, say, a school term for one book.

### ■ INTRODUCING EXTENSIVE READING

The current experience of many teachers of young teenagers is that their students rarely read extensively even in their mother tongue, and may be reluctant to do so. These teachers therefore have to introduce their students to the experience of extensive reading.

A popular way of introducing learners to extensive reading is for teachers to read aloud from a graded reader while the learners listen and follow the text in their own copies of the book. This can make the stories easy to understand and very enjoyable. The class know the teacher's voice, they are not faced with the task of trying to vocalise the words (even silently), and the momentum of the teacher's reading prevents them from 'blocking' each time they see an unknown word. This technique also helps to reinforce the sound of English words, which is often different from the way the words are written.

Most teachers present the story as a series of episodes, reading three or four pages (about 5 minutes) at the end of each lesson. This would mean that, for example, *Dino's Day in London* (Penguin Easystarts) would be completed in about four lessons.

It is a good idea with all beginner or elementary classes for teachers to read the first book aloud, even with groups of adults. Remember that even adults enjoy listening to stories!

After reading one or two books aloud, the teacher may adopt a mixture of different techniques.

This could be to continue to read some sections aloud but to use a cassette recording in other sections. This can be a very pleasant alternative because it allows the class to hear different voices, and often cassettes have interesting sound effects (see Chapter 5). Sometimes, the teacher may ask learners to read the section at home before they hear it in the following lesson.

Sometimes the class can listen with their books closed, especially if they know the section already.

Another technique is to ask learners to read parts of a story silently from time to time. This is good preparation for home reading, and teachers can be sure that more concentrated work is taking place than at almost any other time. Also, such a period of silent reading in the class gives teachers time to go round and offer help and encouragement to individuals, which teachers may rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to do in other circumstances.





Some teachers play recordings of appropriate music while their learners are reading silently in class. They say that this seems to assist relaxed concentration.

### Reading aloud

Listening to the teacher reading aloud is very important for the learner's development of reading skills. Research has demonstrated that, in children, the successful development of reading is determined largely by their early, regular experience of listening to someone else reading aloud.

However, it should be stressed that **we do not recommend** that learners are asked to read aloud. 'Reading for vocalisation' (reading aloud) is a very difficult skill - particularly in a foreign language. Comprehension is often sacrificed because learners concentrate on the pronunciation of words rather than the meaning. Asking learners to read aloud reduces their confidence and makes them slower, less efficient readers - even when they are reading silently.

Reading aloud also tends to destroy any interest or enjoyment which learners might gain from the stories.

Asking a learner to read aloud while the rest of the class listens can give rise to the following problems:

- the reader will become tense and anxious and feel that he/she is being 'tested'.
- the reader will concentrate on pronunciation rather than meaning.
- the rest of the class will be exposed to slow, flat, expressionless reading and often the incorrect pronunciation of words.
- the rest of the class will be 'listening for mistakes' rather than listening to the story.

Reading aloud by learners is possible when preparing plays for acting, or when reading dialogue which can be used in role-play activities, but this should only be done after the learners have read the text silently and understood it or heard the text read aloud (see Chapter 4).

### ■ USING A CLASS READER

This section contains suggestions for using a reader in class. It is important to note that all the techniques which teachers can use before reading, while reading and after reading are designed to assist and enhance comprehension rather than test it.

The Penguin Readers series gives plenty of support to teachers using their readers in class. The books start with an interesting introduction giving a 'taster' of the story and details of the author. Teachers should encourage their students to read this introduction as it will greatly help their comprehension of the book. Penguin Readers also include exercises at the back of the books; these divide the book into sections and include motivating 'Before you read' and 'After you read' activities for each section.

### Penguin Readers Factsheets

Penguin Readers Factsheets have been developed for teachers using Penguin Readers with their class. Each Factsheet is based on one reader, and consists of two separate sheets, one with Teacher's Notes, and the other with Activities for students. Together, these two sheets provide teachers with a complete package of supplementary information and activities for using the reader in class.

The Teacher's Notes include a summary of the book, details about the author, and a section on the background and themes to the novel, placing it in its cultural, social and historical context. They also include a section of teacher-led activities focussing on character, plot and theme to supplement those at the back of the reader.

The Activities section is photocopiable and provides a selection of activities for before reading, while reading and after reading the book. The activities supplement those at the back of the books, and provide extra help with comprehension and interpretation of character, plot and theme. The first activity is normally linked to the introduction in the book. Some of the activities give learners further opportunities to voice their opinions and to respond emotionally to the text.

The Activities sheets are also suitable for use in self-access centres and class libraries.

Penguin Readers Factsheets are free of charge and can be obtained from Longman offices worldwide.

### ■ INTRODUCING THE CLASS READER

#### Suggestions for teachers

Always introduce a class reader by talking about the topic of the book, whether it is fiction or non-fiction. Try to draw out from learners what they already know about the subject or what their expectations are. With beginners and elementary level learners, it is perfectly reasonable to do some of this in their mother tongue.

The books themselves are usually well illustrated. Use the cover, title and picture to talk about the book and ask what the class thinks it will be about.

If you look at the cover of *Marcel and the White Star* (Penguin Easystarts), you might ask questions such as: *Who do you think Marcel is? What do you think the White Star is? What do you think happens in this story?*

Additionally, show the class pictures from inside the book. For instance, in *The Lost World* (Penguin Readers Level 4) there is a picture which shows a man on a beach examining a huge dead animal, with two other men in the distance. Ask the class who they think the man is, what they think he is doing on the beach, what type of animal they think he is looking at, who they think the other two men might be, etc. In this introductory stage, write on the board new vocabulary items which may prove difficult. This is particularly important in the elementary stages of language learning when learners can easily be discouraged.

If working with simple readers with lots of pictures in them, especially those with a picture above each piece of



text, such as *Flying Home* or *The Troy Stone* (Penguin Easystarts), cover the text with a paper mask. Then ask the class to talk about the pictures and to note down the new vocabulary as they go along. They can also make notes of how they think the story unfolds. They can then compare their version with the text.

Use the learners' knowledge of the outside world and encourage them to ask questions out of school as well as in. For instance, if you are reading *The Grass is Singing* (Penguin Readers, level 5) ask learners to find out a little about the colonisation of Africa and some of the problems this created. Get them to ask older friends or members of their family who may have knowledge of the subject. If the story is a Western, such as *St Agnes' Stand* (Penguin Readers, level 3), ask who has seen a Western recently, when there was last a Western at the local cinema, etc. With well-known stories like *Dracula* (Penguin Readers, level 4), find out how much they already know about the story, whether they have read it in their own language, whether they have seen a staged or film version (which will often differ greatly from the original and provide interesting comparisons).

Similar preparation can be interesting before readers concerning such topics as ghosts, monsters, and UFOs. It can be interesting to find out learner opinions on current problems and possible solutions before they read about them; after the reading, the discussion will be more interesting if previous doubts and queries have been answered or opinions changed.

If using a Penguin Reader, remember to use the introduction to the reader and the background information in the Penguin Readers Factsheets, as these provide invaluable background information.

There can be no 'rule' for the way a title is introduced. Without telling the story, an attempt should be made to create the atmosphere and give pointers which will help learners to understand the situation and characters better when they are reading. This may consist simply of whetting their appetite by linking the story as closely as possible to their own experience. If, for example, the story is about a natural disaster such as a volcanic eruption (*Dante's Peak*, Penguin Readers, level 2), find out if learners have ever read about one or experienced one or seen a film about one. There will be very few reader titles which do not provide something in the way of a situation, event, experience or character that you cannot link to the outside world and the learners' curiosity and interest.

### **Further suggestions for introducing a class reader**

- Photocopy the illustrations and stick them on to cards. Ask learners to put them in sequence and to speculate on the story.
- Photocopy the illustrations and cut out the faces of key characters. Give learners a list of the names of these characters. Learners try to match the names and faces.
- Make a list of the chapter titles of the book. Ask the class to put them in sequence and to speculate on the story.
- Present a key scene (as in a film 'trailer') to motivate interest in the story, eg, the shower scene in *Psycho*.
- Present key events from the story as tabloid newspaper headlines, eg, 'Mad wife in secret room!' for *Jane Eyre*.

### **■ ACTIVITIES WHILE READING THE BOOK**

Whether the class is reading a book together or learners are reading individually, teachers will usually find some activities useful at regular points during the story. The purpose of these activities is:

- a) to ensure that the text has been understood sufficiently.
- b) to encourage learners to think about key facts, events or characters.
- c) to encourage learners to make predictions about the way in which the book will develop.
- d) to 'support' the process of comprehension. Many learners get lost or lose interest in the middle of a book, particularly if the language is difficult.
- e) to keep up the momentum of reading.

### **Reviewing the story so far**

Many activities are based on the idea of reviewing 'the story so far'. Some suggestions are:

- Re-tell the story in a number of simple sentences. Learners put them into the correct order.
- Exploit the illustrations by mounting them (without the text or captions) on cards. Give them to groups of learners who place the cards in the correct order and then use them to 're-tell' the story so far in their own words.
- If there are several characters in the story, individual learners can be asked to concentrate on the story so far from the point of view of a single character. Each learner should look back through the text and illustrations and make notes.

For example, if the class is reading *The Troy Stone* (Penguin Easystarts) a learner might write:

**Mark Jackson is on holiday in Turkey. He is staying at a big hotel in Istanbul. Mark is thirteen years old.**

**Today he is visiting Troy. Mark picks up a yellow stone. Suddenly he sees a white light and hears a strong wind...**

- With some stories it is possible for learners to write a 'diary' for one of the characters. In *Fly Away Home* (Penguin Readers, level 2), learners might write the diary of Amy or her father.
- Write a simple summary which contains factual mistakes. Ask the class to rewrite this summary with the correct facts.

Activities can focus on the characters in the book:

- Ask learners to make notes on the key characters and relationships in the story, or to analyse the personalities of the main characters.
- Ask learners to make lists of similarities and differences between major characters.



### Vocabulary recording

Ask learners to keep a record of any new vocabulary they meet while reading.

**Note:** See the centre section of this guide for a photocopiable Vocabulary Record Sheet for you to use with your learners:

- In the first column, learners write the new word.
- In the second column, they copy the sentence in which the word occurs.
- The third column is for other forms of the word - perhaps the past tense and past participle forms of a verb, the plural and adjectival forms of a noun, or the adverbial form of an adjective. These can be found in any good dictionary.
- In the last column, 'Memory Idea', learners write down something to help them remember the word. This might be a translation, a sentence about a friend in which the word is used, a picture, or a note of the sound of the word. Each person uses different memory systems and learners should be encouraged to try out some of the above ideas.

### Reading diaries

Asking learners to keep a reading diary is a good way of helping them to think about and respond to what happens in a story.

In order to enjoy a story, readers must use a combination of comprehension and memory. Comprehension in reading means being able to combine new ideas with remembered ideas. Comprehension is built as the story is gradually revealed.

A reading diary helps learners to recall ideas and events in the story and to build their comprehension. A reading diary also prompts learners to make notes of their *feelings* as the story develops; how one *feels* about a story or the characters in it are a key element in the enjoyment of the story.

**Note:** See the centre section of this guide for a photocopiable Reading Diary for you to use with your learners. Learners can fill it in at regular intervals as they read. With longer stories at higher levels, learners may need to record their feelings more frequently; in this case you can make more copies of the bottom half of the diary.

### Further activities

- Give learners key lines of dialogue. Ask them to explain who said which one to whom. Where were they and what were they doing?
- Use 'time lines' to present the actual sequence in which events occurred.
- Characters frequently write or receive letters or other messages. Invite learners to write them.
- Choose a key scene from the story. Invite learners to reflect on the sounds they would hear, the scents they would smell, the textures they would feel.

### ■ ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE WHOLE BOOK

Many teachers like to exploit the complete story after learners have finished reading. Exercises can be used to summarise or extend what learners have read, or to reflect on learners' responses to the book.

Teachers will find a selection of writing activities at the back of each Penguin Reader, and further activities on the Penguin Readers Factsheet for each book.

### Suggestions for activities

- Give learners a list of words describing characteristics (brave, noble, strong, cowardly, etc). Ask them to match the words to the characters in the book.
- Learners use maps to mark the events and journeys in the book.
- Learners retell the story through the diary of one of the key characters.
- Learners reflect on how the characters change during the book.
- Learners speculate on what the characters do after the end of the story.

The following activities give learners opportunities to use the language they have encountered while reading, as well as exploit learners' understanding of the text.

- At low levels, write the names of characters and descriptions of them on pieces of paper and mix them up. Ask learners to match characters to descriptions.
- Also at low levels, learners play 'Who am I?'. One learner pretends to be one of the characters from the book. The class asks questions but the character can only answer Yes or No. The class try to guess the character.
- At higher levels, a learner pretending to be a character can be 'interviewed' so that he/she retells the story from his/her own point of view.
- For any level of reader, take the letters of the name of a character. Learners try to find words which begin with those letters and describe the character. Look at this example from *Emma* (Penguin Readers, level 4):

E - legant M - ischievous M - eddlesome A - ristocratic
------------------------------------------------------------------

Learners can have great fun discussing these words and how they fit the character!

### Further activities

- Find a list of the characteristics of each horoscope star sign - Taurus, Aquarius etc. Learners try to decide the star sign of each character.
- Some people say 'we are what we eat'. It is true that sometimes taste in food is an indication of character. Learners can be invited to speculate on the eating habits of different characters in the story.
- Play the game 'If Hamlet was ...'. I.e, take a character





from the book and think of what type of animal, city, food, etc they would be. Eg, 'If Hamlet were a city, he would be ...'. These comparisons help learners to express and discuss their impressions of different characters.

- Ask learners to choose actors to take part in the film of the book. Sometimes this activity can be stimulated by suggesting unsuitable actors.

<i>Sherlock Holmes</i>	Sean Penn
<i>Dr Watson</i>	Rob Lowe
<i>Mrs Hudson</i>	Elizabeth Taylor

- Learners describe what each of the characters might have in their pockets or handbag.
- Groups of learners record a 'dramatised version' of one of the key scenes on cassette.

### ■ TEACHER - STUDENT QUESTIONS: HOW AND HOW OFTEN?

It is important to select the right time and place for questions, possibly towards the end of a classroom period when there is not enough time to read another section of the story.

At elementary levels, ask straightforward comprehension questions, or questions which will reveal whether the class has understood the general meaning of the text. You may also want to ask questions which encourage learners to use their imaginations - questions to which the answer is not contained in the text. *What do you think she had for breakfast? Where do you think he went on holiday? How many children do you think they have?* Notice the use of 'do you think' in these questions which signals to the learners that they should use their imaginations. Selected questions giving a purpose to home reading will also be appropriate.

From intermediate level upwards, ask questions which will make learners think behind the action to the causes of events and the reasons for behaviour. As the level of the class progresses, questions beginning with 'why' and 'how' should replace those beginning with 'what'.

In the early stages, ask questions which do not require elaborate responses; later, as the ability and confidence of learners increases, use more open-ended questions.

Asking questions as described in this section should be done in moderation: not more than once with shorter readers and not with every reader. No kind of questioning or exercise or practice should be allowed to frustrate the learners' desire to carry on reading to find out what happens next.

Do not constantly interrupt the story with questions. Complete a section, and if you are satisfied that the class has understood it, continue to the next section without asking any questions.

If you do wish to ask questions on a section of text, some suggestions for ways of doing this are as follows:

Start by choosing a few suitable sentences from a part

of the story that has been read in class and ask two or three questions about each sentence, based on the types below. E.g.:

*John and Peter are walking from the bus stop.*

*Field and Stone are waiting in their car.*

*They are near the bus stop and they can see the boys.*

With this text, you could ask the following questions:

- literal meaning:-  
*Who is waiting in the car?*
- logical inference:-  
*Who are they waiting for?*
- opinion:-  
*What do you think they are going to do?*
- leading to learners' personal experience:-  
*Do you travel to/from school by bus/car? Is there a bus stop near your home?*

Wherever possible, ask questions that bring out details which affect, or point forward to, later events and which will help learners to anticipate sudden twists in the plot. Also, ask questions which point to peculiarities of character and behaviour. E.g.:

*Why is X feeling like this?*

*Why did Y react like that?*

*Has Z done anything like that before?*

As learners progress, ask questions of a more general nature than before:

*Did you expect that to happen? Why?*

*When did you begin to suspect that... ?*

*How does/did (a fact/event/action) affect... ?*

and so on.

### ■ FURTHER PRACTICE

Class readers offer many opportunities for language work, whether oral or written, and can be adapted to a number of different teaching situations.

- They can be used for bringing together and revising language items which learners have already covered in their course book.
- They provide a situation and a topic for practising dialogue and real communication.
- In comic-strip stories or other heavily illustrated readers, the pictures can be used for vocabulary practice or extension.

Such language practice should be controlled and not allowed to interrupt the flow of a story.

When an elementary-level book has been read and understood, a particular type of language pattern may be selected for practice, E.g.:

**Why? - Because ...**

*(Babe - The Sheep-Pig, Penguin Readers, level 2)*

*Why does Farmer Hogget have Babe?*

*Because he wins him.*

*Why does Babe sleep with the sheepdogs?*

*Because he misses his mother.*



Learners can ask and answer similar questions about the rest of the story.

More advanced learners will benefit more from taking part in discussions and other activities such as role playing, interviews and so on.

## ■ MAKING LESSON PLANS FOR USING A CLASS READER

Making lesson plans for using a reader will help you to ensure that the procedures and activities you use are varied, both for individual classes and for situations in which you are using readers with several classes. Any of the suggestions in this book should be considered as 'possible' procedures or activities within an overall plan for a reader. Suggestions should be adapted to suit each reader and the time available, as well as the age, level and interests of your learners.

As a guide to how to start working out a series of lesson plans or worksheets for a reader, ask yourself a number of questions:

- a) What level or age group is the reader suited to?
- b) Does it present any particular difficulties such as unfamiliar background, a lot of factual information, confusing sequence of events, a large number of characters?
- c) What kind of activities can be used with the reader?
- d) What kind of language and vocabulary is used? Is there any part of the book where the language can be exploited to reinforce language practice in the learners' course book?
- e) What kind of reaction is the book likely to produce among the learners? How can this lead to further practice, activity, project work, etc?

When reading the book for the first time, make notes of significant details of the book: facts, story-line, characters; also of points that will need explaining, language that can be exploited, any pictures, charts, maps, etc. that can be used to introduce the book or make it more interesting. Note can also be made of possible discussion topics, subjects for composition, and so on. It is surprising how many ideas present themselves at the first reading and are subsequently forgotten as consideration of details obscures the wider issues. Lesson plans can then be made from these notes.

If the plan includes a discussion topic, make notes first, leaving space to add ideas that come out of discussions on the topic in different classes.

Skeleton notes about 'ghosts' might be something like these:

*Do they exist?*

*If 'yes': What kind? Where? What proof or reason can you give for belief?*

*If 'no': Reasons for disbelief.*

Before making lesson plans, it is worthwhile making a separate list of different types of exercise and activity

which can be considered in making up the plans for different readers. A check column on the right will make it easy to keep a check on how often a particular activity is used and to ensure that each class has sufficient variety in its work.

Below is a suggested list to start with. It is not intended to be exhaustive. Add to it as new ideas occur to you:

- a) preparing and asking simple, factual (comprehension) questions
- b) preparing exercises - if needed, remembering that many readers already have a variety of questions at the back and in many cases these will be sufficient
- c) asking specially directed questions both for giving purpose to reading and for directing learners' attention to certain aspects of the book
- d) mini-dialogues or pattern practice based on an exchange in the text
- e) re-telling part of the story
- f) re-telling or re-writing the story or part of it from different points of view, or as it might be told by different characters
- g) transfer of information: where possible, learners make graphs, draw diagrams, pictures, maps, etc. to show they have understood the text
- h) role playing situations from the book
- i) use of role cards
- j) discussion (controlled for lower levels; open for higher levels, possibly leading to a debate)
- k) composition or summary work (written)
- l) project work, usually as an extension of a discussion
- m) speech work

### Sample lesson plan

For an example of a lesson plan for introducing a new low-level reader to your class, see the centre section of this guide.

This example plan uses the reader *Run For Your Life* (Penguin Readers, level 1). The plan illustrates the different stages of an introductory lesson. Note that the aim of the lesson is to focus on the story rather than on reading as a language exercise, and to familiarise learners with the setting and main characters in the story. The pictures are used to motivate learners.

Although 'reading aloud' by the teacher would not always be used at higher levels, it is a very good method of demonstrating to learners that they can understand and enjoy the story. In this way, reading will become a self-motivating process for learners.

In the lessons which follow an introductory lesson, teachers should always try to support the reading process of their learners. See earlier in this chapter for ideas on how this can be done. Learners need to feel that they are making progress through the story and that their level of understanding is sufficient for them to enjoy the rest of the story. They should never be allowed to feel that they are getting lost through insufficient comprehension.

■ Main text continued on page 17.



Word	Sentence where I found the word	Other forms	Memory idea <i>Eg: draw a picture, write a sentence, write the translation, write what the word sounds like</i>
worry	Don't worry. We are not afraid of ghosts.	worries, worried, worrying	My mother worries when I come home late.



Title of book ..... Level.....

## Part 1

Where and when does the story start? Who are the main characters? What sort of story is it? What happens in the first part of the story?

How do you *feel* about the first part of the story? Is it interesting? Do you like the characters?

## Part .....

What happens in this part of the story? Has the setting changed? Have new characters been introduced? Have some characters become more important or less important? What do you feel about the events which have happened?

How do you *feel* about this part of the story? Do you still like the characters? Has your opinion about any of the characters changed?





Introducing RUN FOR YOUR LIFE  
(Penguin Readers, level 1)  
Length of lesson: 50 minutes

Class level: Late beginner  
Materials: Map of Europe, copies of *Run For Your Life*.

## **Warm-up (5 minutes)**

Show the map of Europe to learners and invite them to identify major cities. Focus on Spain and identify major cities. Draw attention to Barcelona. Elicit from learners (in L1 or L2) any knowledge or ideas they have about Barcelona (Olympic Games, Spanish dancing, etc).

## **Introduction (5 minutes)**

Tell learners they are going to read an exciting story, which took place in Barcelona. Hand out books and invite learners to look at page 5. Introduce the two main characters, Kim and Dave. Invite learners to speculate on their age, nationality and the location. Explain that Kim and Dave are on a school trip to Spain because they are learning Spanish. Most of the time they visit the city in a bus (see picture on page 6).

Now invite learners to look at the pictures in the book and to speculate on the story. Invite learners to identify the GOOD and BAD people in the story.

## **Reading the story aloud (10 minutes)**

Write the following questions on the board and explain them.

1. How old are Kim and Dave?
2. Where do they come from?
3. What does Dave want to do?

Read pages 1, 2 and 3 aloud to the class. Read in a loud clear voice. Let learners 'follow' in their books. Do not stop for comprehension problems. Tell learners to understand as much as they can. Elicit answers to the questions. (Answers: 1. Seventeen. 2. Liverpool. 3. To look round the old town.)

## **Reading silently (10 minutes)**

Write the following statements on the board and invite learners to say if they are True or False. Learners look back at the text if they cannot think of the answers.

1. Kim and Dave are friends. [True]
2. Kim can understand some Spanish. [True]
3. Kim and Dave have Spanish lessons in the afternoon. [False (morning)]
4. People say the old town is not dangerous. [False]

Then deal with any comprehension problems. Try to demonstrate that learners do not need to understand every word in order to understand the story.

## **Reading aloud (10 minutes)**

Invite learners to look at the pictures on pages 4, 5 and 6. Ask them to suggest words which might come into the story. Tell them any words they ask about.

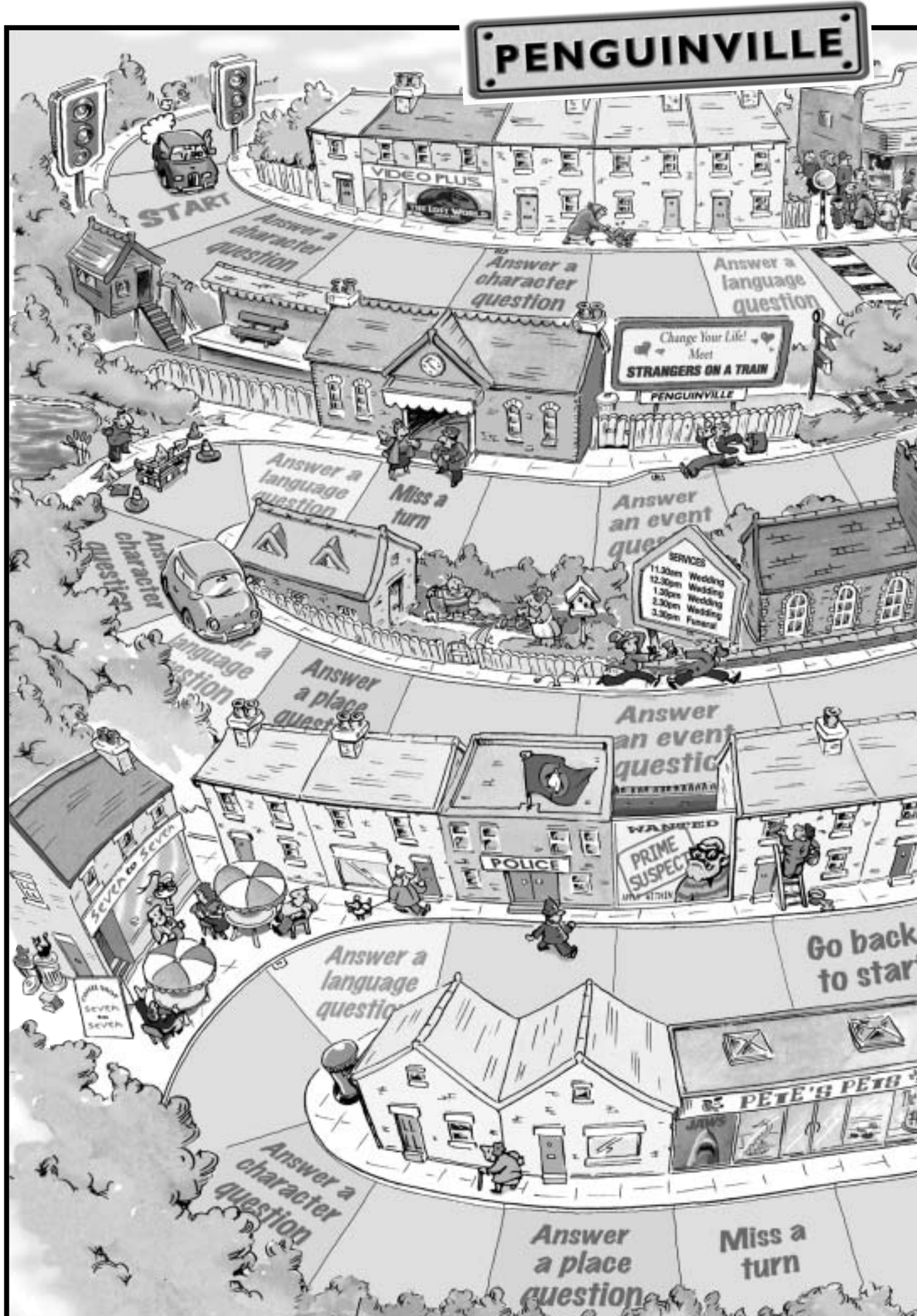
Now read the text from pages 4, 5 and 6 aloud whilst learners follow in their books. Ask learners to speculate about what was in the rubbish bin.

## **Ending the lesson (5 minutes)**

Review what has been covered in the lesson: the map, Spain, Barcelona, Kim and Dave, etc. Then invite learners to re-read pages 4, 5 and 6 at home and to read pages 7, 8 and 9 before the next lesson.

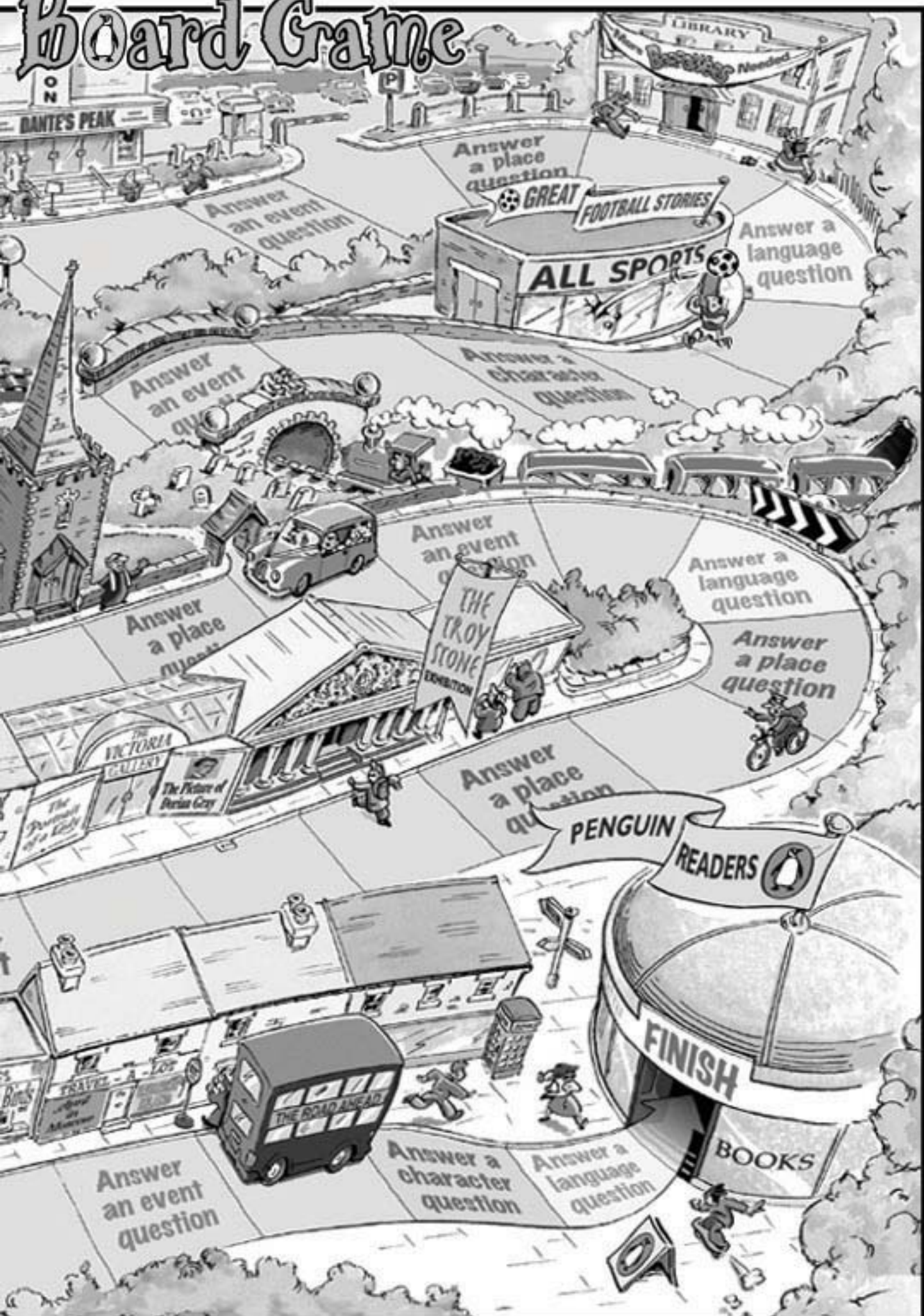


# PENGUINVILLE





# Board Game



## CLASS LIBRARY CHART

## Titles of books

[illegible]

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[illegible]



## BOOK REVIEW

Your name: .....

Title of book: .....

Author: .....

Level: .....

Number of pages: .....

Date started: .....

Date finished: .....

What kind of book is it? What is it about?

Is the book easy or difficult to understand? Do you like the pictures? Are these helpful? Do you like this book? Why? Which parts/characters do you like best? Do you think the book has a message? What do you think that message is?

Is this book similar to any other books you have read? List them below.

PHOTOCOPIABLE



These role plays are for teachers to use with their classes. See page 21 for notes on using role plays in class.

## The Godfather (Penguin Readers, level 4)

Role play for three characters. Learners have read to the end of Chapter 3.

Role 1	Role 2
You are Don Corleone. You are going to meet Virgil Sollozzo. Study the first section of Chapter 3.	You are Virgil Sollozzo. You are going to meet Don Corleone. Study the first section of Chapter 3.
	V.S. Explain that you need money for a new business. Say it will be good for Don Corleone.
D.C. Ask why Virgil Sollozzo has come to you.	
	V.S. Say you need someone with important friends.
D.C. Ask how much the Tattaglia family will get.	
	V.S. <i>(Surprised)</i> Say you will pay the Tattaglias with your money.
D.C. <i>(Gives Sollozzo more wine)</i> Say you respect Sollozzo but refuse and give your reasons.	
	V.S. Say no one will know that D.C. is in the business.
	Role 3
	You are Sonny Corleone. You are with Don Corleone when he meets Virgil Sollozzo. Study the first section of Chapter 3.
	S.C. <i>(Interrupts)</i> Ask if the Tattaglias can promise ...
D.C. <i>(Stops Sonny with a stare)</i> Apologise for your son. Repeat that your answer is no. Wish Sollozzo good luck. Thank him for his visit.	

## The Canterville Ghost (Penguin Readers, level 2)

Role play for two characters. Learners have read up to the end of the entry for Tuesday, 22 December 1942.

Role 1	Role 2
You are the ghost. You are going to meet Virginia. Study pages 19, 20 and 23.	You are Virginia. You are going to meet the ghost. Study pages 19, 20 and 23.

## The Diary of a Young Girl (Penguin Readers, level 4)

Role play for two characters. Learners have read to the end of page 17.

Role 1	Role 2
You are an interviewer. Ask Anne Frank about her family and about the secret annexe where they now live. Ask her about the other people in the annexe.	You are Anne Frank. It is the end of December 1942. Tell the interviewer about your family, the secret annexe and the other people who are there. Invent any details you don't know.

## Dante's Peak (Penguin Readers, level 2)

Two role plays, each for two characters. Learners have read to the end of Chapter 8.

Role play 1

Role 1	Role 2
You are Karen from the newspaper in Dante's Peak. You are going to interview Harry Dalton from the United States Volcano Office. Ask him about his life. Ask him why he thinks Dante's Peak might explode.	You are Harry Dalton. Tell Karen about your life and explain why you think Dante's Peak might explode. Give as many reasons as you can.

Role play 2

Role 1	Role 2
You are a reporter from Karen's newspaper in Dante's Peak. Karen wants you to interview Paul Dreyfus from the United States Volcano Office. Ask him about his work and why he doesn't think Dante's Peak will explode.	You are Paul Dreyfus. Tell Karen about your work and explain why you don't think Dante's Peak will explode. Give as many reasons as you can.



## ■ USING PENGUIN EASYSTARTS

Low-level learners of English will not immediately be motivated by the idea of reading a story in a foreign language. Learners do not believe they are capable of reading, understanding and enjoying a story when they know so little language.

With Penguin Easystarts, teachers can demonstrate that learners with only six months of learning can already enjoy a story in English.

As learners are most familiar with the voice of their teacher, they will enjoy listening to the teacher reading a story for 5 or 10 minutes at the end of a lesson. Ideally, learners should look at the text and the pictures while the teacher reads aloud.

### **Starting with *Flying Home***

*Flying Home* is a charming story of a parakeet who escapes from his cage in a New York home and starts to fly south to his real home in Brazil.

### **Exploiting the book cover**

Start by showing learners the cover of the book. The learners identify the bird. You may need to teach the word 'parakeet'. Try to elicit where parakeets come from. Learners find Brazil on a world map.

Draw attention to the title *Flying Home*, and ask learners to guess what the story is about. (Learners may want to reply in their mother tongue. You may accept this response if it is appropriate.)

Finally, tell the class that the bird is called Felix. Ask whether Felix is a male bird or a female bird. Confirm that Felix is male.

### **Exploiting the first illustration**

Tell learners to look at the picture on page 1 and to suggest where it is. Learners will suggest the name of many large cities. Ask them to look quickly at the text on page 1 and find the name of the city.

Learners find New York on a world map and look at the distance between New York and Brazil.

Finally, check understanding of the word 'cage'.

### **Reading the first three pages**

Read the first three pages aloud, interacting with the learners whilst reading to check understanding. E.g., '*What is the name of the family in New York?*', '*What do the Baxters give Felix?*', etc.

Show the learners as you turn the page so that they turn their pages at the same time.

### **Finishing the activity**

When you have finished page 3, tell the learners that you will read more of the story in the next lesson.

To check understanding, ask the learners to hold up their books to show you these words in the pictures: tall building, big cage, sky, moon, jungle, Felix's family.

Ask learners to re-read the first three pages at home if they wish.

## **Continuing the story**

In the following lesson, read the next four pages in the same way. Ask questions as you read. Encourage learners to find pictures of the Statue of Liberty. Find the Atlantic Ocean on a world map and encourage learners to trace Felix's journey to Brazil.

Continue working with the story using the same procedures. Read three or four pages each lesson. In this way you should complete the story in four or five lessons.

## **Exploiting the cassette**

All stories in the Penguin Easystarts series are available on audio cassettes, which present the stories clearly read aloud by a native speaker reader. Some sound effects are added to make the reading more exciting.

When learners are experiencing their first story, use the cassette only after you have read the story aloud. The cassette is very good but it cannot be as good as a 'living' teacher.

Where possible, also get learners to listen on their cassette players at home to the section of the story you have read in class.

## **Exploiting the exercises**

The last page of each story in the Penguin Easystarts series contains suggestions for exercises and activities. Some of these can be done while reading the story, others when learners have finished the story. They can be done at home or in class.

## **After reading exercises**

### **Retelling the story**

Learners can retell the story through key words. Write skeleton sentences on the board for learners to build on in class. They can then try to write a summary of the story by expanding the notes.

### **Making a radio version**

Choose the best reader in the class to be the narrator, and other learners to play other characters in the story. Groups will need someone to operate the cassette recorder and someone to hold the microphone. Sound effects and music can also be added. Ask a learner to design the cassette cover.

Use the cassette recording to present the idea to other classes. Build up a 'library' of recordings made by different groups of learners.

## **Moving on**

When learners have worked on four or five Penguin Easystarts, they should be ready to move on to more complex stories ■



## 3 The class library

### ■ WHAT IS A CLASS LIBRARY?

A class library is quite simply a box or shelf containing a selection of different readers suitable for the age and language competence of a particular class. The idea is that the titles selected should all be different. They need to be attractive to people who happen to be in the same class but who may have very different interests from each other. Some learners will like adventure stories, some romantic stories, some classics, some will want to read about serious issues and some will want the fun of a strip cartoon. The level of all the books should be roughly the same, but as some learners are likely to be more advanced than others, it is a good idea to cater for mixed abilities. Learners should be allowed to see for themselves whether a book is the right level for them.

As the overriding aim is for fluent, competent reading, where overall meaning and enjoyment count for more than individual words, it is important that learners are not discouraged by finding the books too hard or uninteresting.

The same applies to schools wishing to set up a self-access centre, although obviously in this case there would be a far wider range of books. Books must be clearly arranged and labelled according to age and level, so that learners can choose appropriately.

### ■ CHOOSING BOOKS AT THE RIGHT LEVEL

Remember that in any class there will be a range of levels. Remember also that the learners will all be at a higher level at the end of the year than they were at the beginning. Most teachers find that in any school year the range of books in the library should cover at least three different stages.

Some learners will always want to choose the easiest books. Allow them to do this initially but encourage them to be a little more adventurous when they come to choose their second or third book.

A good guide to selecting a book at the correct level can be produced by reproducing about twenty lines from the text and blanking out (with typewriter corrector fluid) every sixth word. If learners feel they can understand this text, then they should be able to read the book.

Remember that learners can always read at a higher level if they are interested in the topic. If they have some background knowledge, they will find it easier to guess the meanings of any difficult passages.

### ■ ORGANISATION OF THE LIBRARY

You will need:

1 A selection of books.

There should be one and a half times as many books in the library as there are learners in the class. This way you are providing enough choice, while keeping the size of the library easily manageable.

2 A box or shelf to store the books

3 A class library record chart

A class library record chart provides you with a record of which books your students have read from the class library. The chart should list the names of the learners in the class down the side, and the titles of the books in the class library along the top. The dates on which a book is borrowed and returned should be recorded by each learner. By glancing at these dates, you can get a idea of how fast your learners are reading.

It is also a good idea for the learner to indicate by a simple code method whether the book was enjoyed a lot, a little, or not very much at all. This might be just a spot made with a coloured pen (red = excellent, green = OK, blue = not good) or an A, B or C.

**Note:** For a photocopyable Class Library Chart, see the centre section of this guide. This can be enlarged and printed on to an A3 sheet of paper. For large classes, use two charts.

By using a chart like this, the teacher can administer the library successfully and also see at a glance which books have been popular and how each learner is progressing. Learners can readily see what books their friends have chosen and whether they recommend a particular title, and in this way are guided towards popular books. It will also help you when you are purchasing your next selection of books.

If a school has one self-access centre for the whole school, a different chart could be used for each class or level within the school.

### ■ PREPARING LEARNERS FOR READING

The techniques below encourage learners to get useful information about a book before they start reading. This will build up their interest in a text, and train them to recognise different text types and guess and predict what the text is about.

#### a) Elementary level readers

The following has been found to be particularly useful with elementary readers where learners' reading abilities in the new language are limited. It can, however, be done with all readers.

**Preparation:** Make sure the class knows the common words for different story types (adventure, detective, love story, science fiction, etc.)

**Pairwork:** Put learners into pairs and give two or three books to each pair. Ask them to look at the cover of a book, then ask them:

- What is the title of the book?
- What kind of story do you think it is?
- Is there a picture on the cover? What is it of?

Now ask learners to look inside the book. Ask them:

- Are there a lot of pictures?
- What kind of pictures? (Photos, drawings, strip cartoons)
- When does the story take place? (A long time ago, now, etc).
- Who are some of the people in the story?
- Do you think the story will be exciting, funny, romantic, etc?





When the pairs have looked at all the books, they can report back to the class. Depending on the level and type of class, this phase might be done in the mother tongue. Alternatively, you can insist that the pairs report back in English.

#### *b) Pre-intermediate and upwards*

Learners at this level should have had some experience of reading in English.

As above, put learners into pairs and give them two or three books. They can be asked to look at the title of a book and say what they think they will find in the book. When they have answered, they can turn to the back cover, the contents page and introduction, if there is one, to see if they were right. They might by now be able to answer when and where the story takes place and also who they will meet in the story. By looking inside the book they should be able to say whether there is one long story, a number of short stories, a play, several plays or whatever else.

If there is no summary of the story on the back cover, learners may later want to write their own for the benefit of other learners in the class.

### ■ GUIDANCE

In the early stages, until the reading habit builds up, it is important to give the class some guidance as well as encouragement in their reading. Many of the learners may be reluctant readers in their own language and may hardly ever have read a book.

Always give learners a purpose for reading a book. In some countries, teachers write or type a couple of 'focus' questions inside the front cover of each book. The aim is to encourage the learner to look for the main point of the book and not worry too much about the individual words. Too often learners think that by understanding each word in a sentence they have understood the total meaning. This may well not be the case. Unless you give early guidance to help them concentrate on the main points of a book they may become rather inefficient readers and will certainly read slowly. This can be a problem with learners in many countries and there is no doubt that by encouraging learners to read a lot in their early stages of learning English, teachers can overcome this problem. Guidance in the early stages of reading will be of help later when learners come to read texts which are more difficult.

Here is an example of the kind of 'focus' question which you can give before a book is read:

***Babe - The Sheep-Pig*** (Penguin Readers, level 2)

*How does Farmer Hogget get Babe?*

*Why do the sheep like Babe?*

*Why don't the sheep like the sheepdogs?*

*What are Farmer Hogget's plans for Babe?*

Point out that learners can answer these questions very briefly: they are not to be turned into full-scale discussion or composition questions. Do not forget that through these questions you will be able to focus learners' attention on different aspects of a book. You might decide to choose an aspect which learners might not otherwise think about or fully appreciate.

An alternative way of giving learners a purpose to reading can be to ask them:

- a) to read a given number of books per term (or year), listing them in order of preference and being prepared to justify this order;
- b) to be prepared to talk about one of the books, whether read in class or outside; a learner should be able to say why she/he has chosen to talk about one rather than another title;
- c) to prepare a collage of pictures, maps, realia, etc. related to any book read in or outside the classroom; the learner should be prepared to discuss the reason for including - or excluding - any item from the collage.

Where suitable, this can also be seen as an exercise in 'transformation of information', since it will sometimes be possible to draw diagrams, graphs or route maps to illustrate parts of the text.

### ■ GROUP READING

We have assumed so far in this discussion of extensive reading that learners each have their own individual title which they exchange for another title as soon as they have finished reading it.

However, in some circumstances this may be difficult to achieve, either because there are not enough different titles to go round, or because some learners find they cannot easily acquire the reading habit.

Group reading, also known as shared experience reading, may be one way to help learners in these circumstances. Shared experience reading means that a group of learners share the same title and work together both in reading and in related activities. The idea works like this:

- a) Set a group task, be it a 'focus' question or other task.
- b) Encourage the faster readers to help the slower ones.
- c) With the help of the teacher, each group can plan its own activities to complete the task (one person can keep a record of these activities). E.g., one person in the group will draw a time chart, another will draw pictures of the main characters, etc.

The final task could involve:

- acting out part of a story
- asking the rest of the class to quiz them about the book
- telling the rest of the class what kind of book it is, what its main points are, where its interest lies, etc.

(Most of the ideas in this book can be adapted to shared experience reading.)

- d) Set aside part of a lesson for each group to present their task to the rest of the class.
- e) Have some spare titles ready, so that as soon as one group has presented its title, it can start a new one.



After the second group has presented its title, the learners can (if they wish) read the first group's title and so on until all titles have been read by each group.

## ■ CHECKING AND MONITORING

### **Book review sheets**

One of the simplest and most effective ways of checking that reading is taking place is to have a series of book review sheets.

**Note:** See the centre section of this guide for a Book Review Sheet which you can photocopy and use in your class library.

Learners fill in a sheet after each book they read. The purpose of a book review sheet is to encourage learners to reflect on their experience of reading a book. Some teachers may feel that this is so important that at lower levels the sheets might be written in the learners' own language.

Book review sheets should be made available for other learners to read in order to help them in choosing books for themselves. A copy can be kept in a file for your future reference: they are a good means of measuring learners' progress over a school year or a number of years as learners explore different kinds of book and try more difficult levels. The sheets also serve a useful function as pointers to titles which are likely to be popular with other classes.

### **Book spots**

Another way to check that reading is taking place is to have a regular 'book spot' in a lesson (perhaps once every three or four weeks). Learners would be invited to talk to the class and make recommendations. There would be no pretending or evasion as it is more difficult to deceive fellow classmates than it is the teacher. It is natural to try to persuade friends to read books that we ourselves enjoyed; this activity can be valuable because it involves real communication of thoughts and ideas.

Other ideas for checking and monitoring can be found in the next chapter. Whatever means of checking you choose, try to build up in learners a sense of confidence and satisfaction in reading. The best test as to whether learners are really reading books is whether they actually want to read more!

## ■ WHEN TO STOP SUPERVISING

Learners will in time feel confident enough to select books which are of interest to them, just as they do with books in their own language. Just as their reading for pleasure in their own language is not monitored, so they should be regarded as responsible enough not to need this in a foreign language.

## 4 Readers as a basis for communicative activities

The ideas in this section are suitable for use with a class reader and as an extension to library reading or reading in a self-access centre.

## ■ PLAY READING

Play reading is essentially a group or class activity. Few learners will enjoy reading plays on their own unless they have the use of a cassette.

### **Choice of play**

For most learners, the play should be at the same level as their course book. A play is all dialogue and will provide lots of practice and repetition in a natural and motivating context. Beginners and elementary level learners should be given sketches and short one-act plays. Leave longer plays for advanced classes.

### **Reading the play**

If you have an audio cassette of the sketch or play, start by playing through the sketch, or a scene from the play, with learners' books closed. The idea is for learners to get the general idea of what is going on and to let the stress and intonation patterns make a first impression on them. Ask general comprehension questions to see if they have caught the 'gist' of what is happening.

Now let learners open their books and read while the cassette is played again.

The next step is to ask learners to read aloud, correcting pronunciation only where absolutely necessary. Following this, suggest that they learn a role as homework. When the class next meets, ask for volunteers (do not force!) to act out the scene at the front of the class.

An alternative, especially if there is no room for movement at the front of the class, is to 'broadcast' the play. This can be done quite realistically by putting up a 'microphone' (try using a rolled-up newspaper or cardboard tube) into which they all speak; if a large cast is needed, two tables and two 'microphones' can be used. There are several advantages to broadcasting a sketch over acting it out. Although some rehearsal is advisable to familiarise the 'actors' with what they have to say and how to say it, learners can use their books as scripts just as radio actors do, preparing them during rehearsals by marking in pencil the stress, intonation, pauses, etc. Shy learners will usually find this easier than acting in front of their classmates and they should all be encouraged to enter into the spirit of the broadcast by laughing, getting angry, etc. as required. You may even be able to record these scenes on your cassette recorder.

With a longer play, you may like to give a summary of the play, its setting and main characters before you begin reading. A follow-up exercise could be for different groups in the class to prepare their own programme notes for the play, such as you buy when you go to the theatre.

Ideally, a play should be acted with movement, and if sufficient space is available there will usually be enough learners who want to learn the words and act the play.



Different groups of learners can prepare the same scene and have a little competition, which will encourage the shy ones to take part in order to help their group. Those who do not wish to act can do other things. It is most important to give everyone something to do. Someone can direct the actors; others can prepare the 'stage' and be responsible for the props; a prompter will be needed. Others can be newspaper reviewers and of course there is always the need for an audience!

### **Make your own play**

Many ordinary stories or scenes from stories can be made into plays; doing this is both interesting and useful. Comic-strip stories which have dialogue and no narrative are already 'disguised' plays. Other books often have considerable amounts of dialogue; learners can ignore the narrative parts such as 'he says', 'she asked'.

When a book is mainly narrative, it is a useful exercise for the class to turn the narrative into dialogue. This is a way of practising changing reported speech into direct speech forms, for instance.

## **■ ROLE PLAY**

Teachers often ask how to do role plays with classes at elementary to intermediate level. This section will suggest how it can be done using readers. The stories in readers, both fictional and factual, provide valuable contexts for role play activities, and through reading the stories, learners have most of the language and ideas they need for their roles. They can invent any extra information they need.

Role play activities are valuable for the language which learners have to produce. Equally important, however, is the careful reading which is required as preparation for the activity.

**Note:** In the centre section of this guide you will find some ready-made Role Play Cards to photocopy and try out with your learners. You can also use them as examples from which to create your own role play cards. Further details on using these role plays are given in the notes below.

### **Simulation**

Simulation requires a little preparation because learners must imagine themselves in roles based on or suggested by those encountered in the reader. Learners are asked to reproduce a scene from a book. They can do this using the actual lines from the book or they can use their own words. Both ways of using the role play create valuable language practice, particularly if learners really try to act their characters.

The role plays for *The Godfather* and *The Canterville Ghost* shown in the centre section of this guide are role plays of this kind. In the role play for *The Godfather*, the role play card actually shows the content of each utterance and response. This style of role play may be more suitable for learners who have little experience of role play activities.

Put learners into pairs and give them copies of their role cards. Ask them to read through their books carefully and to think about what they are going to say before they start. They may find it easier if they make notes. Tell them that

they can either reproduce the dialogue from the book or invent their own. Learners with the same role can work in pairs or in groups to invent the dialogue.

An alternative version of the above type of role play is for learners to take a similar situation and invent a dialogue completely different from that in the reader, illustrating how different people can react in different ways to the same situation.

If learners are not given ready-made role cards, they should prepare their own. The cards can be kept for future use with other classes.

The cards can also be graded for use with different levels of learners, with more or less detail depending on the class. With advanced level learners, the same situation can be played in different ways, either by varying the information or by allowing different groups of learners to work out their own dialogue from the same basic information given.

### **Interviews**

Interviews have the advantage of being adaptable to almost any situation or level. Even with post-beginners, simple factual interviews can be set up using level 1 or level 2 readers. The interview could consist of interviewing characters in a story about their actions and/or feelings (as described in the story or, with advanced level learners, as imagined by the learners).

The ready-made role plays from *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank and *Dante's Peak* shown in the centre section of this guide are role plays of this kind.

Before learners do the role plays they will need to read their books carefully and make notes about what they are going to say. This can be done in pairs, with learners playing the same role working together.

In the example from *The Diary of a Young Girl*, learners are producing an oral summary of the story. The interviews from *Dante's Peak* will require careful preparation. Learners acting the roles of Harry Dalton and Paul Dreyfus will need to read their books carefully and take detailed notes.

If learners are reading a non-fiction title, the interview could also consist of interviewing a panel of experts who can talk about the information in the book. Learners should not be expected to give long and detailed answers.

Real information gaps can be created when the person being interviewed has read the text but the interviewer has not. A single interviewer can ask questions of several characters or experts; alternatively, one person can be interviewed by two or more people.

Try to think of different contexts for the interview. If you make the context a TV interview, the rest of the class can act as a studio audience and be invited to take part by giving their own opinions or asking their own questions from time to time.

As mentioned above, a rolled-up newspaper or a cardboard tube can be used as a 'microphone'. Only the learners with the microphone can speak. This prevents too many people speaking at the same time.





## ■ DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

With higher level readers, discussion and debate can be a very rewarding activity for learners, particularly if they are discussing issues which interest them. Graded readers often give rise to interesting discussions as the learners are asked to think about and discuss a situation, character or issue within a defined context. You will obviously be the person to judge when a class is ready for discussion rather than simply answering questions. Every teacher knows the terrible silence which comes over a class when learners are asked to 'talk about X' and are either unprepared or unable to express their ideas clearly, if at all.

Initially, learners need considerable prompting and help from the teacher. Preparation is the key to success both for discussion and debate. Ask learners key questions to help them formulate their ideas. Getting learners to work in pairs before they have a group or class discussion can be very helpful as they can pool their ideas and develop their thoughts together.

## ■ PROJECT WORK

When a class discussion at any level shows that the topic has aroused sufficient interest, learners can be encouraged to carry out some kind of (small) project work. They can do this in pairs or groups. The type of work will of course depend on the topic, but there should always be a purpose in mind: there is little incentive to do extra work and study if they are simply told to 'find out more about the subject'.

### Writing a questionnaire

Writing a questionnaire, getting responses and analysing the results is a challenging and enjoyable project - it is quite difficult to set up and fun to do.

A project such as this could be done after learners have read a reader which introduced an interesting issue. For example, a topic could be 'slavery', with learners canvassing opinion on whether violence is justified in the fight to be free. (This could be done after reading *Amistad*, Penguin Readers, level 3.)

Alternatively, learners could write a questionnaire and carry out a class survey into learners' opinions of a class reader which has just been finished. They could ask questions such as:

*Did you enjoy the book? Which parts did you like best? Which characters did you like? Why? Would you recommend this book to another class?*

The form of the questionnaire can be worked out initially in groups, with the teacher's help, and tried out on other groups in the same class. At first, it will be found that a number of the questions don't work; that is, they do not elicit the kind of answers that will be useful in a final analysis. Suitable forms of questions can be worked out by trial and error in the class, then learners can try them out on learners in other classes or among friends and relations, the eventual aim being to be able to analyse the answers and come to a conclusion from them.

## Presentations

In another kind of project work, a topic can be followed up by groups of learners collecting information and presenting it with pictures, graphs, diagrams, etc. to reinforce or extend any particular aspect of the story that interests them. This in turn could lead to a class discussion.

### Writing a screenplay

Many books in the Penguin Readers series have been made into films or have been written from the screenplays of films, and an interesting project for learners could be to write a screenplay for part of a book.

First, learners must decide which parts of the book would best transfer to film. Other questions they need to ask themselves are:

- Which characters would be in the film?
- How would the film begin?
- What title would they give the film?

Tell learners that they must have precise details of the scene and the characters, as well as the dialogue. Different groups can work on different bits.

## ■ COMPOSITION WORK

Many topics for written composition will arise from discussions of class readers, and learners will write better and with more interest if they have already talked about the subject in class. In the early stages, it is always advisable to discuss the topic in class first, with the learners making notes from a plan on the blackboard. As learners progress, they can make their own plans in groups and the scope for different types of writing widens to include such possibilities as:

- a) *narration*: re-telling part of the story, whether from a particular (person's) point of view or as a narrative version of a reader that is mainly dialogue
- b) *dialogue*: re-writing part of a narrative story as a play
- c) *argument*: using the points already put forward in a class discussion
- d) *character study*: analysing character(s) based on their actions, words spoken, the opinions of other characters in the story (much of this should already have been discussed in class), etc
- e) *descriptive writing*: based on information in the book about a person, a place or a building
- f) *imaginative writing*: based on the ideas found in the reader but allowing full scope for the learners' own ideas (e.g., after reading a science fiction or ghost story)

Such compositions should be given only after using a book for class reading. Any written work connected with extensive reading in a library or self-access centre should be limited to describing which books a learner has enjoyed reading, and why, or preparing a short talk about a selected reader, to be given in class and possibly followed by a class discussion.





## ■ BOARD GAMES

Board games provide an amusing way for learners to recall key characters, places, events and language from a book they have read in class. A ready-made board game can be found on the centre pages of this guide. This can be photocopied and used with any reader, either after reading part of the book or after reading the whole book.

In order to play the game, you will need to prepare some question cards. Write approximately six questions about characters, six questions about places, six questions about events and six questions about key language.

Each question should be written on a card. The cards could be different colours: blue for characters, red for places, green for events and yellow for language.

Each card should contain instructions to move forward for a correct answer and to move back for an incorrect or zero answer. You might like to grade the questions as follows:

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Correct</b>	<b>Incorrect</b>
Easy	3 sq. forward	5 sq. back
Medium	4 sq. forward	3 sq. back
Difficult	5 sq. forward	2 sq. back

Before you play the game you will also need to get some counters or coins, and a dice or numbered spinner. One learner in the group will be the controller and will keep the question cards, moving each to the bottom of the pile as it is used ■

## ■ THE CASSETTE AS STORYTELLER

A cassette can simply be used in the traditional way, as the storyteller: learners listen and follow in their books. This is suitable for a class with a teacher or for an individual learner without a teacher. It is important that the section which is being listened to is not too long and that, although the teacher may like to ask one or two general questions or explain any obviously difficult vocabulary, it is important that the flow should be largely uninterrupted and no detailed questions asked.

## ■ USING A CASSETTE WITHOUT THE READER

The teacher may decide to use a cassette on its own, without the reader, to give learners practice in listening. If this is the case, the teacher can make some preparation for this: a brief explanation can be given as to what type of story learners are going to hear; visual aids such as photos, maps, etc. can be prepared. If the purpose of using the cassette on its own is for anything more serious than pure enjoyment, it is advisable to prepare exercises to ensure that learners understand at least the essential parts. True/false questions or quick fill-in exercises can be used.

An effective way of using a cassette without a reader is to stop the recording suddenly, immediately before or after something exciting or extraordinary has happened, or after a particularly strange or loud noise has been heard. You can then either ask learners what they think will happen or has happened, or what the noise was. If you can time the stop well - just at the end of the lesson - it should stimulate learners to read this part of the reader at home.

## ■ USING CASSETTES FOR PLAYS/SKETCHES

If learners are doing a play reading, it is particularly valuable for them to hear a cassette of the play or sketch before they read, although the teacher must bear in mind the length of the scene or section. Listening to plays or sketches can be excellent preparation for the acting out of the play. If learners are reading small and relatively simple parts in a play or sketch, it might be possible for them to memorise their parts from the cassette reading.

Although readers which are already written in the form of sketches and plays are obviously most suitable for role playing and acting, other stories with plenty of dialogue can be adapted and used for a similar purpose.

## ■ USING A CASSETTE AS A SERIAL STORY

A cassette can be very effective when used as a continuing serial story and played during the last few minutes of class periods. A very brief introduction will be necessary before the teacher begins a new story with an equally brief recap if the teacher is continuing a story. For this, teachers should choose a cassette that is *below* the learners' course book level. Its purpose is to give learners a few minutes of

## 5 Audio cassettes

Many graded readers have an accompanying audio cassette of the text. The Penguin Readers series, for example, includes a selection of Penguin Audio Readers, which are packs comprising a reader and a cassette. These packs are perfect for self-access centres and school libraries, as well as for teachers to use in class. Penguin Easystarts and level 1 readers have cassettes available separately.

Readers should be enjoyed, and a cassette can add greatly to learners' enjoyment of them. Cassettes bring the story to life, often adding interesting and atmospheric sound effects as well as helping pronunciation. It is obviously important that learners can hear the cassette clearly, and it is useful for a teacher to have a pause button on the machine for easy control of the cassette. Some teachers use graded reader cassettes as a serial story in the language laboratory.



relaxation and enjoyment: they can just listen, or can follow in their books. Stopping the cassette at a crucial or dramatic moment will make them eager to know what happens next.

## ■ LISTENING COMPREHENSION

One of the difficulties encountered by most learners of English is that when they do not immediately understand something they hear, they worry about it and cannot concentrate on what follows. They need training in listening for important points, i.e. listening for gist.

Initially, in order to help learners, they should be given two or three questions which will focus their attention on the main points of the story. More questions can be asked after a first listening; learners can try to find the answers as they listen to the cassette for a second time. Learners should not write the answers but should be ready to discuss them when the teacher stops the cassette again.

To encourage learners for whom listening comprehension is a new exercise, it is advisable to choose a cassette that is a stage or so below their usual level.

## ■ THE BENEFITS OF CASSETTES FOR THE CLASS AND THE INDIVIDUAL

The use of cassettes can be a delightful, motivating and instructive way of using readers, both for a class and for individuals. It can lead to class discussion as well as role playing and acting. If it is possible for you to acquire a number of cassettes, they could form part of a class library or self-access centre. This would enable learners to borrow them and listen alone or in small groups ■

## 6 Holiday reading

Many teachers like to ask learners to read one or two graded readers during the school holidays. It should be recognised that this 'unsupported' reading is more difficult than reading with regular help and guidance from the teacher. It is probably best, therefore, to select a grade of reader which learners will not find too difficult.

It may be a good idea to set regular comprehension check exercises like those we have seen above. Penguin Readers, like many other series of readers, have a variety of exercises at the back of the books. To provide additional exercises, each Penguin Readers Factsheet includes two pages of exercises; these can be photocopied and given out to learners along with the reader.

## ■ THE READING DIARY

As an alternative to giving your learners exercises to do, you may like them to keep a reading diary.

Recent developments in the teaching of literature in Britain have focussed on the use of personal reading diaries. Learners are asked to make entries in their diaries at regular intervals in the reading process. These entries will include notes on the following:

- The learner's personal feelings about the process of reading. *That chapter was a bit boring. Too much description and not enough dialogue.*
- The learner's feelings about the characters, sometimes related to personal experience. *Colin is depressed all the time. A bit like that man who works at the garage in the square.*
- The learner's feelings about the settings, perhaps related to personal experience. *I imagine the old dark house to be like the house in the film Psycho.*
- The learner's feelings about the plot. *I don't know why they said "Let's split up." I know that they should have stayed together!*

These notes could be kept in English or in the learner's mother tongue. Since they are a learner's personal record of reading a book, it is not essential that they should be in English.

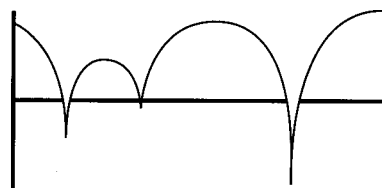
Learners can be encouraged to look back at their diaries while they are reading and make notes of the way in which their opinions change.

Sometimes learners can be asked to re-read the same book again to see if they react to the plot, setting or characters in a different way.

**Note:** For a ready-made Reading Diary which you can photocopy and hand out to your class, see the centre section of this guide. With longer stories at higher levels, learners may need to record their feelings more frequently; in this case you can make extra copies of the bottom half of the diary.

## ■ OTHER TYPES OF HOLIDAY WORK

- Teachers can give learners a fairly simple book but staple together the last two pages. They can then invite learners to write the end of the story!
- Learners can be asked to make a note of any new words which they learn while reading the book.
- Learners can produce a graph of 'good fortune' and 'bad fortune' for one of the central characters.



The graph can be illustrated with notes giving the reasons for the character's good or bad fortune.

- At lower levels, learners might be asked to draw or collect pictures to illustrate selected scenes or characters.
- If learners have access to a cassette recorder at home, they could be asked to make recordings of short readers or scenes from longer books. Learners will often enjoy adding music and sound effects to the basic reading.
- Learners at intermediate or advanced level can be given a low-level reader and be asked to write a reader at a similar level. This is a challenging exercise in exploiting limited language resources.



## SECOND IMPRESSION

Compiled and edited by Nick Dawson.

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## Teacher's Resource Materials

The following additional free teacher's resource materials are available for use with Penguin Readers:

### Penguin Readers Factsheets

*Penguin Readers Factsheets* have been developed for teachers using Penguin Readers with their class. Each Factsheet is based on one Reader, and consists of:

- a summary of the book
- interesting information about the novel and novelist, including a section on the background and themes of the novel
- a selection of lively supplementary activities for use with the reader in class

Factsheets are available for all titles in Penguin Readers at levels 2 to 6.

#### *Starter Pack Parts I & II*

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This is the first in a new series of teacher's guides, containing photocopiable material and teacher's notes relating to themes derived from the Readers themselves or from common teaching situations.

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#### *Penguin Readers Teacher's Guide to Developing Listening Skills*

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For a full list of Readers published in the Penguin Readers series, and for copies of the Penguin Readers catalogue, please contact your local Pearson Education office or:

### Pearson Education

Eleanor Horne, 5 Bentinck Street, London W1M 5RN

Tel: 020 7 487 6027 Fax: 020 7 487 6047

e-mail: [eleanor.horne@pearsoned-ema.com](mailto:eleanor.horne@pearsoned-ema.com)

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# Penguin Readers

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## Teacher's Guide

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### to Using Graded Readers

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This guide offers English language teachers practical advice on using graded readers both in and out of the classroom. It has been compiled by practising teachers and teacher trainers and draws on the ideas of teachers in a wide range of countries who are teaching in different types of schools and colleges.

The guide describes:

- what graded readers are, and the contribution they make to speedy and enjoyable language learning
- how to use a class reader
- activities which can be used with a class reader
- how to set up a class library
- using graded readers as a basis for communicative activities
- using audio cassettes of graded readers
- activities for holiday reading

The guide also includes the following templates for teachers to photocopy and use with their learners:

- a vocabulary record sheet
- a reading diary
- a lesson plan
- a class library chart
- a book review sheet
- role play cards
- a beautifully illustrated board game, which can be used with any reader



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